

News from the Wyoming Department of Health

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Cards to Help Residents Recognize Heart Attack, Stroke Signs February is National Heart Month

Because more than half of Wyoming adults don't recognize heart attack and stroke signs and symptoms, the Wyoming Department of Health's Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program is providing "wallet cards" to help residents learn more.

Joe Grandpre, Wyoming Department of Health chronic disease section chief, noted in Wyoming heart disease is the number one killer of adults, stroke is the number four killer and stroke is the number one cause of permanent disability.

The 2007 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey data shows 59 percent of adult respondents could not correctly identify the five symptoms of a heart attack and 51 percent could not correctly identify the five symptoms of stroke.

"People know the obvious signs like chest pain for heart attack or face numbness for stroke, but the other signs and symptoms are not so familiar," Grandpre said.

"It's important to recognize all the potential signs and symptoms of a heart attack or stroke, because quick action such as calling 9-1-1 significantly improves the chances of a better outcome for patients," Grandpre continued. "Timing is critical."

Dave Ivester, Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program manager said, "The 100,000 wallet cards we're providing list the five signs and symptoms for heart attacks and strokes and remind people to immediately call 9-1-1 if they suspect a heart attack or stroke."

The cards also have space for a personal list of current medications, allergies and emergency contact information. "This information is helpful to first responders or to emergency room medical personnel," Ivester said.

The five major signs and symptoms for a heart attack are:

- *Pain or discomfort in the jaw, neck, or back.
- *Feeling weak, light-headed, or faint.
- *Chest pain or discomfort.
- *Pain or discomfort in arms or shoulder.
- *Shortness of breath.

The five major signs and symptoms of a stroke are:

- *Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg.
- *Sudden confusion or trouble speaking or understanding others.
- *Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.

- *Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, or loss of balance or coordination.
- *Sudden severe headache with no known cause.

To request wallet cards or for more information about the Wyoming Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program, contact Ivester by emailing dave.ivester@health.wyo.gov or calling 307- 777-3732.

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